

The Kendall Office Commences Its First Adopt- A-Family Program for Hurricane Affected Families

On September 8, 2005, the Kendall Office commenced its first annual Adopt-A-Family Program. The Adopt-A-Family program is a comprehensive program that assists hurricane affected families by providing the resources needed to become self-sufficient while preserving the family, maintaining self-respect and instilling hope. Team Metro is committed to changing the lives of families affected by Hurricane Katrina by giving them a once in a lifetime chance - and following through with them, as their family and their lives improve dramatically.



Through the destruction of Hurricane Katrina in the early morning hours of August 29, 2005, which affected the Gulf Coast States, many families were evacuated before and after the storm. One such example is the Almaguer family consisting of Lee Michelle Almaguer and her two children, Juleeam 4 years old and Adrian, 3 months old. Ms. Almaguer lived in the area of Gulfport, Biloxi, Mississippi for five years. She had a thriving daycare business from her home, until the imminent Category 4 hurricane threatened her way of life. Hours before the storm was to make landfall, she packed her belongings, and drove with her children to the nearest shelter. After the Hurricane subsided, her hopes turned to despair-her entire home was destroyed. She was also notified that most of her surrounding neighbors had perished during the storm.



With the assistance of a good neighbor who provided her a vehicle and with an invitation by friends Mr. and Mrs. Aredondo who reside in Palmetto Bay, Florida, she accepted their invitation and headed South to Miami. A few days after her arrival, Ms. Almaguer received assistance from the State Department of Health's W.I.C. (Women, Infants and Children) program which offers assistance to women who have infants or children under the age 5. She received items such as infant formula, dairy products, cereals

and other food items, and was referred to Team Metro for further assistance.

Through the Adopt-A-Family Program, adopters and adoptee will form friendships that may continue throughout the year, making the experience even more meaningful for both sides. We are partnering with Miami-Dade County's Sister Cities Program, which has chosen the cities within the State of Mississippi, to create and strengthen partnerships between the County and international communities through increased global cooperation and understanding. Through our program, we strive to provide the Almaguer family with all the basics needs as well as assistance with housing, employment and transportation.

In a time when so many have so little, it is good to know that we live in a community of people who are willing to ease the burden. In addition, on Wednesday, September 21, 2005, the Kendall office will host a "Family Night" event where we will be accepting donations for our adopted family as well as other hurricane affected families who are in need. Working with people and addressing sensitive environmental and social issues early is the centerpiece of Team Metro's mission. We look forward to adopting other families in need, and expanding our program well into the future.